

Rare pair fix fading cameras in Nevada

by Staff Sgt. Erick Studenicka

NEVADA AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, Nev. — Endangered species are scattered around the world, sometimes in the least likely of places. The few hundred remaining mountain gorillas are found deep in the Congo. A few dozen Amur tigers exist in out-of-the-way Siberia. The surviving giant pandas are in secluded southern China.

But the last two KS-87B film camera repairmen remaining in the military, Tech. Sgts. **Brian McBeth** and **Brian Guettler**, are found in a remote avionics shop in Nevada.

"We are something like the dodo bird," joked Sergeant McBeth, comparing his job to the flightless bird that became extinct in the 1700s. "This shop is the last option for repair in the military. When we're gone, there'll be no one left to fix these cameras."

The KS-87B camera is used in C-26 counter-drug surveillance aircraft to provide high-resolution photo reconnaissance. Although digital technology has replaced film in many military photographic situations, film remains the standard for verifiable documentation in court cases and hence main-



Tech. Sgts. Brian McBeth (left) and Brian Guettler repair a KS-87B film camera in the avionics shop at Nevada Air National Guard Base in Reno, Nev. Reminiscent of an auto salvage yard, the repair shop is a graveyard for dozens of cameras waiting to be used for spare parts.

tains its importance in the National Guard Bureau's counter-drug program.

There are about 100 KS-87B cameras in use, with about half of those needing regular maintenance during a given year. With replacement parts extremely expensive or often unavailable, the two sergeants have become experts in hoarding spare parts and

pieces from inoperable cameras.

"The military is going to continue to use film as long as it's possible to fix the cameras," Sergeant Guettler said. "These cameras are reliable, and right now there's not enough money to convert the program entirely to digital."

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by 2nd Lt. Erin Dorrance



Dragon breath

TAMPA, Fla. — Maj. **Michael Hamill**, Air Force team coach for a dragon boat race, takes a dragon breath after getting indoctrinated into the coaching ranks the old-fashioned way. Skinny, colorfully painted dragon boats swiftly paddled through Tampa's downtown Garrison Channel in May during its Asia

Fest. The boats, including one from MacDill Air Force Base, Fla., competed in Tampa's first dragon boat race. The MacDill team, composed of people from base organizations, finished second in Division B, second highest of seven divisions, in 2 minutes, 4.21 seconds. The Tampa Police Tactical Unit finished first in 2:01.88.